



Universal Acceptance Day Uruguay - May 26 , 2025

UNESCO – Recommendation 2003

Marcello Lucas Figueredo – National Commission of Uruguay for UNESCO

1. Institutional introduction and recognition of the event

Marcello opens his speech with a greeting from the **UNESCO Regional Office in Montevideo** , highlighting its presence in Uruguay for over 75 years. He explicitly congratulates **ICANN** and **ISOC** for organizing the event and the high turnout, acknowledging their role in positioning Uruguay on the international stage of Universal Acceptance.

2. UNESCO as a partner of Universal Acceptance

Marcello emphasizes that his intervention is not intended to be technical but rather institutional: to reaffirm **UNESCO 's commitment** to the cause of digital inclusion. He emphasizes that UNESCO and ICANN **are strategic allies** in the fight for a truly inclusive internet, and that the organization is here to support the efforts of the local and global stakeholders involved.

3. Theoretical framework: the 2003 UNESCO Recommendation

He presents the **Recommendation on the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace** , adopted by UNESCO in **2003** , as a visionary document. It is based on Article 1 of **UNESCO 's 1945 Constitution** , which for 80 years has promoted the free flow of thought through ideas and images. According to Marcello, today's problems are not new, but have historical roots with new names.

4. Problems identified and evolution of digital access

Despite technological advances, Marcello emphasizes that **ICTs present a paradox** : they can facilitate access to ideas, but they can also **deepen inequalities** if not adequately addressed. obstacles that persist to this day:

- Inequalities **socioeconomic**
 - **Geographical** barriers
 - Exclusion **cultural and linguistic**
 - Lack of **digital literacy**
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5. Chapter 1: Multilingualism and Indigenous Languages

The recommendation calls for **creating multilingual content** , including indigenous languages. Marcello contributes figures forceful :

- By **2023** , at least **15% of the world's population** will be excluded from internet access **solely because of language barriers** .
- Only **400 of the nearly 7,000 languages** spoken in the world are fully accessible online.

This highlights an alarming cultural and linguistic gap and justifies the joint work of UNESCO and ICANN to address it.

6. Chapter 2: Universal access to networks and services

Universal access is presented as **an essential condition for the exercise of human rights**, in line with the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. However, it also highlights that:

- **Affordability** is key: there's little point in having infrastructure if the rates are unaffordable.
- Member States must **ensure affordable fares**, especially for:
 - Communities educational
 - Institutions public
 - People with disabilities

In addition, it proposes the need for **local experts** who can provide technical assistance to underserved communities, such as **rural schools** in Uruguay.

7. Chapter 3: Public domain content

Marcello advocates for the development of accessible and public content, always respecting **privacy** and **copyright**. He emphasizes the citizen's right to:

- Access **public administration files**
- See them **digitized and available online**

He points out that **not all countries have the resources** to digitize their archives, highlighting the role of **UNESCO's Memory of the World program**, which supports member states in these efforts.

8. Cross-cutting approach: digital ethics and literacy

It connects the 2003 Recommendation with contemporary challenges such as **artificial intelligence**, stating that:

- **Digital literacy** should not only be technical, but also **ethical** .
- When using tools like AI, we must develop critical and ethical users, not just skilled ones.

He calls on us not to be dazzled by technologies without reflecting on **their moral and social implications** .

9. Closing and key message from UNESCO

It concludes with a quote from **Dr. Tawfik Jelassi** , UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information:

“Universal Acceptance is the cornerstone of a truly global and inclusive Internet.”

He emphasizes that this is not just a technical challenge, but **an act of cultural and ethical commitment** to inclusion in the digital space.

Conclusion

Marcello concludes by reaffirming the **alliance between UNESCO, ICANN, and Uruguay** as a collective effort for a multilingual, accessible, and equitable Internet. He declares that they are together in this "battle" for a digital society without exclusions.
